

POWDER POINT BRIDGE

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THE BRIDGE IS DYING

Powder Point (Long) Bridge is closed for the nonce for reasons that are obscure. Three town officials gave us 3 versions for the situation. Monday afternoon we crossed the bridge to Duxbury Beach and walked back.

Our general impression is that the bridge is in a sad state of disrepair. In the first 3 heavy planks as you step on the bridge, the dry rot is obvious. About every 20th plank could do with replacing. There is a 6-inch hole in one plank. Finally, a few spans beyond the channel, you come to a caved-in section. According to one version, this was caused by a heavy vehicle -- a tractor or some kind of bulldozer. In any case, it highlights the contention frequently heard over the past few years, that the bridge is unsafe.

We don't know what those marine borers (Teredos) have been doing to the pilings lately, but they are busy little things. But never mind arguing. If this bridge is to be repaired, it will cost more money than the job is worth.

We have heard some talk of building a causeway from each side of the rickety bridge, then connecting it with a wooden structure. We would like to hear more about the idea.

Meanwhile, we offer a suggestion that went unheeded when we first made it a decade or so ago. Since there is about one parking slot for every dozen stickered cars, which raises frustration to an angry concert pitch on hot August weekends, there are ways to get the disgruntled taxpayers to the beach without piling cars on top of one another in the inadequate parking lot at the beach end of the bridge.

Run some sort of bus service from the high school or middle school parking lots from, say, 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on a publicized schedule. That is, if the tired old structure can stand the strain. No matter what bridge, however costly, you vote at a soon to be held special town meeting (be prepared to ante up about \$600,000 on a 20-year bond), you will wind up with parking problems.

There is one drawback to our idea. Non-residents may fill the school parking lots and use the buses to an extent that might bring crowds to the beach.

The idea is worth a little study, don't you think?

Duxbury's recreational facilities are a bit out of whack at the moment. As you will read in this issue of the Clipper, vandals have forced the state to close down the century-old Myles Standish Monument, much to the consternation of irate tourists. Normally, 50,000 visitors show up each year. The decline in tourist population deprives us of no sleep, but it does seem a shame that such an enjoyable facility as the monument is closed because vandals have made it unsafe.

The loss of our recreational facilities, however temporary, reminds us that we do have unique attractions.